Battling Terror

by Maj Terry L. Branstetter

Situation

You are the commander of Company B. Your battalion is prosecuting the war on terrorism in the Philippines. The battalion has been conducting company-sized raids from amphibious shipping. You have met with some success, especially since you joined forces with local military and police forces that are sympathetic to your mission. These successes consist of arms seizures and the apprehension of several alleged terrorist leaders.

Today, your company will link up with a squad of local military forces to raid a suspected terrorist training camp on a remote island. The objective is a barracks compound near a small coastal village bordered by vegetation that thickens as you move inland.

Your mission is to seize the objective in order to apprehend potential terrorist personnel and destroy weapons. Your scheme of maneuver is as follows: your 1st Platoon will helicopter into a landing zone (LZ) about 1 mile northeast of the objective. This platoon will link up with a squad of local forces at a nearby cemetery and move along two routes to isolate the objective. One squad will parallel a road to the objective. The remaining members of the reinforced platoon will approach the objective from the east.

You will arrive in a second helicopter wave consisting of 2d Platoon to assault the objective. A third wave consists of one squad from your company reinforced with engineers who will destroy weapons if found. This wave is oncall and will arrive within 20 minutes of your call.

When you are 15 minutes from the LZ, your 1st Platoon commander reports successful linkup with the local squad. Meanwhile, your CH–46 pilot informs you that one of the flight's four helicopters had to return to the ship. While passing word about the reduced size of your flight, your radio/telephone operator informs you that a squad from 1st Platoon encountered a minefield and has casualties.

Unable to get the 1st Platoon commander on the radio, your flight arrives at the LZ. As the helicopters depart over the coast, you reestablish communications with 1st Platoon to receive the following report. "Six, this is One. 2d Squad has three wounded in action in a minefield near the road. Break. We have taken fire from the objective. One local killed, one wounded. Break. 1st Squad reports three captured; one is wounded and claims to be American. Break. I am currently between my two forces. Over."

Requirement

In a time limit of 5 minutes, explain how you intend to react to this situation. Provide a sketch of your actions and the rationale behind them. Submit your solution to *Marine Corps Gazette*, TDG #03–4, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, fax 703–630–9147, or e-mail <gazette@mca-marines.org>.

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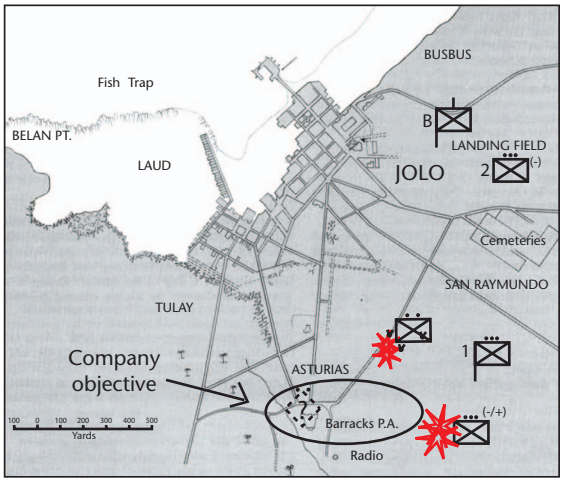

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